

RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATIVE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC'S POLICY TOWARD THE BUKHARA PEOPLE'S SOVIET REPUBLIC: STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND LEGAL FOUNDATIONS (1920–1924)

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Abstract

This article examines Soviet Russia's policy toward the short-lived Bukhara People's Soviet Republic (1920–1924) through an analysis of historical developments, legal-constitutional frameworks, and Soviet geopolitical interests. In the wake of the Russian Revolution and Civil War, Bolshevik forces helped overthrow the Emirate of Bukhara and established a revolutionary regime that navigated a complex path between nominal independence and increasing Soviet control. Drawing on archival documents and scholarly sources, the study explores how Soviet Russia pursued strategic goals in Central Asia such as securing its southern frontier and spreading revolutionary influence while simultaneously crafting legal instruments (treaties, constitutions, and agreements) to legitimize its presence in Bukhara.

Keywords: Bukhara People's Soviet Republic; Soviet Central Asia; Jadidism; National Delimitation; Geopolitics; Legal Status.

Introduction

The fall of the Emirate of Bukhara and the establishment of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic (BPSR) in the early 1920s marked a watershed moment in the history of Central Asia. This period witnessed the replacement of a centuries-old hereditary monarchy with a revolutionary "people's" government under Soviet influence. The present study investigates Soviet Russia's policy toward the BPSR from 1920 to 1924, focusing on three interrelated dimensions: the **historical developments** that led to the creation and demise of the BPSR, the **legal and constitutional frameworks** that underpinned Bukhara's status and relationship

with Moscow, and the **geopolitical interests** that motivated Soviet involvement in Bukhara. By examining these dimensions, we seek to understand how and why the Soviet leadership championed Bukhara's ostensible independence for a brief period, only to later dissolve and integrate it into the Soviet state.

Bukhara's experience is significant for several reasons. Historically, the emirate had been a Russian protectorate since the late 19th century, but it retained nominal sovereignty and a deeply traditional society up to 1920. The Bukhara revolution of 1920, carried out with Bolshevik military support, is often portrayed as a classic example of Soviet "liberation" of an Eastern people from feudal oppression. Yet, the reality of Soviet-Bukharan relations was more complex, involving careful legal arrangements and power dynamics that balanced local revolutionary aspirations against Moscow's strategic agenda. On one hand, Bolshevik leaders such as V.I. Lenin publicly affirmed the right of Bukhara and other Eastern nations to self-determination and freedom from colonial domination. On the other hand, Soviet Russia was keenly interested in securing its influence over Bukhara due to the region's strategic position bordering British India, Afghanistan, and Persia, and its role in broader plans for spreading revolution into Asia. The outcome was a **People's Soviet Republic** that enjoyed de jure sovereignty, its own government and even a national emblem and currency, but which was de facto heavily dependent on Soviet Russia.

Methods

This study employs an interdisciplinary historical-legal approach, combining methods of archival research, textual analysis of legal documents, and contextual geopolitical analysis. Primary sources consulted include **official documents and agreements** from the period 1920–1924, such as the Treaty of Alliance between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic signed on 4 March 1921, and the **Constitution of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic** adopted in September 1921. These documents provide insight into the formal legal basis of Soviet-Bukharan relations and the internal governance of the BPSR. We have also examined contemporaneous Soviet commentaries – for example, Georgii Safarov's 1921 work *Kolonial'naia revoliutsiia: Opyt Turkestana* (The Colonial Revolution: The Experience of Turkestan) – which offer early Soviet interpretations of the Bukhara revolution and

its significance. Archival records from both Russian and Uzbek repositories (such as decrees of the Bukhara Revolutionary Committee and congress proceedings) were used when available, particularly to verify dates and decisions of Bukhara's governing congresses.

In addition to primary documents, the research heavily relies on **secondary scholarly sources** to provide context and analysis. Key works include Seymour Becker's seminal study *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865–1924*, which offers a detailed narrative of Russian-Bukharan relations and the political maneuvering up to 1924. Adeeb Khalid's writings – notably *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* and *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* – are used to understand the ideological currents (Jadidism, nationalism, communism) and the process of national delimitation that affected Bukhara. We also incorporate perspectives from Soviet-era historiography (e.g., Uzbek historian A. I. Ishanov's monograph on the BNSR and collected essays like *Puti Bukhary i Khivy k sotsializmu*, 1967) and from recent research (e.g., Hélène Carrère d'Encausse on Central Asian reform movements, Paul Bergne on the origins of Tajikistan, and Baymirza Hayit on the Basmachi revolt). These sources help triangulate facts and interpretations, ensuring a balanced analysis of both Russian and Central Asian viewpoints.

Results

The Emirate of Bukhara, a traditional Central Asian state under the Mangit dynasty, had been a Russian protectorate since 1868, maintaining internal autonomy while ceding control of foreign relations to the Tsarist empire. By the late 1910s, the emirate was ruled by Emir Sayyid Alim Khan, whose regime resisted modern reforms and faced growing internal dissent from young intellectuals influenced by Jadidism (Muslim reformism). After the Russian February Revolution of 1917, reformist elements (the “Young Bukharians”) initially hoped for liberal changes in Bukhara and received some encouragement from the new Russian Provisional Government, which reaffirmed Bukhara's independence in 1917. However, Emir Alim Khan's concessions were superficial, and he harshly suppressed demonstrations by reformists in 1917–1918. Tensions escalated when Bolsheviks took power in Russia; in March 1918, a Bolshevik-led military attempt to force

changes in Bukhara was repelled by the Emir's forces, resulting in a humiliating setback for the Soviets and an affirmation of Bukhara's sovereignty in the short term. The Treaty of Kyzyl-Tepa (1918) was concluded between Bolshevik authorities in Turkestan and the Emir, temporarily **clarifying the balance of power**: Bukhara agreed not to harbor Russian enemies and the RSFSR tacitly acknowledged the Emir's authority, essentially a status-quo arrangement amid the chaos of the Civil War. During 1918–1919, Bukhara became a refuge for anti-Bolshevik elements (White Guards, Islamic clergy, and others) fleeing Soviet Turkestan, while the emirate's opposition (Young Bukhara activists and nascent local Bolsheviks) regrouped in exile in Tashkent and other nearby areas [1].

By 1920, the balance shifted in favor of the Bolsheviks. The Russian Civil War was winding down with Soviet victory in European Russia, freeing up Bolshevik attention for Central Asia. Within Bukhara, the underground **Bukhara Communist Party (BKP)** had strengthened, supported by the Turkestan Soviet authorities and the RSFSR government. Simultaneously, a revolutionary wing of the Young Bukharians led by Fayzulla Khojaev emerged as key local allies to the Bolsheviks. In August 1920, Bolshevik commanders, notably Mikhail Frunze (head of the Turkestan Front), attempted negotiations with Emir Alim Khan, demanding reforms and entry of Reds into Bukhara – terms the Emir rejected. Shortly thereafter, the decision was made in Moscow and Tashkent to **“finish with Bukhara”** by force. In a coordinated action, the Bukhara Revolution began on 27–28 August 1920 with an uprising of Young Bukharan supporters in the town of Chardjui (Charjew) on the Amu Darya. On August 30–31, rebel forces and Red Army units captured key points around Bukhara; by September 2, 1920, Bolshevik troops (4th Army of Turkestan Front) and Bukharan revolutionaries stormed the city of Old Bukhara after fierce fighting, including artillery and aerial bombardment of the Ark (the Emir's citadel). Emir Alim Khan fled his capital during the assault – according to accounts, he disguised himself and escaped with a small retinue, eventually seeking asylum in Afghanistan. With the Emir's flight on 2 September 1920, the **centuries-old Bukharan monarchy was effectively extinguished**.

In the immediate aftermath of Bukhara's capture, revolutionary forces set up a provisional government. On 2–3 September 1920, a **Revolutionary Committee (Revkom)** of Bukhara was established to assume power, composed largely of

indigenous Young Bukhara activists and local Bolsheviks. Fayzulla Khojaev, a 25-year-old prominent Jadid and revolutionary leader, was appointed as Chairman of the Revkom. A Council of People's Nazirs (Ministers) was also formed, reportedly including only native Bukharans and largely Jadid intellectuals: for instance, Qari Abdulkhalik Olimov as Nazir of Internal Affairs, Abdulrauf Fitrat as Nazir of Foreign Affairs, Usmon Khoja (Usmonkhodja Polatkhodjaev) as Nazir of Education, and others, demonstrating a deliberate inclusion of Western-educated Bukharan reformers in key posts. This new coalition government sought to stabilize Bukhara and assert its authority throughout the former emirate's territory. Notably, on September 11, 1920, the **Young Bukharians formally merged with the Bukhara Communist Party**, uniting the two revolutionary factions under the Bolshevik organizational framework. This merger indicated a consensus on establishing a Soviet-style republic, albeit one led by a mix of communists and left-leaning nationalists [2].

Formation of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic: The definitive proclamation of the new state took place one month later. From October 6 to 8, 1920, the First All-Bukhara Kurultay (Congress) of People's Deputies was convened at the palace of Sitorai Mohi Khosa (the former Emir's country residence outside Bukhara). This congress, with delegates representing various social groups and ethnic communities of Bukhara, **abolished the emirate and declared the establishment of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic (BPSR)**. The Congress adopted foundational resolutions: it set up the permanent structures of the republic's government, including the **All-Bukhara Congress of People's Deputies** as the supreme legislative authority and a Central Executive Committee (CEC) to act as the highest governing body between congress sessions. Fayzulla Khojaev was elected Chairman of the CEC (effectively the head of state), with Usmon Khoja as his deputy. A Council of People's Nazirs (Ministers) was also approved, constituting the executive branch under Khojaev's leadership. Importantly, the Congress signaled Bukhara's claim to **sovereign statehood**: it adopted national symbols (a red flag with Islamic inscriptions, a state emblem) and even authorized a national currency to be issued. Delegates emphasized the multiethnic nature of the new republic (acknowledging Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen, and others as equal citizens) and the intent to build a "people's state" free from feudal oppression.

While the new Bukharan government was being formed, **recognition and support from Soviet Russia** were forthcoming. Lenin's government in the RSFSR was keen to portray the BPSR as an equal and friendly state rather than a conquered territory. At the October 1920 Congress, the official representative of Soviet Russia, plenipotentiary I. Aleksandrov (or Lyubimov, according to some sources), addressed the delegates and formally **recognized the independence of the Bukhara People's Republic on behalf of the RSFSR government**. This diplomatic gesture was highly significant: it reinforced Moscow's narrative of respecting national self-determination in the East and countered any impression that Bukhara was simply annexed. In fact, on November 6, 1920, the RSFSR and BPSR exchanged notes confirming mutual recognition. By acknowledging Bukhara as a sovereign republic, the Bolsheviks aimed to win local goodwill and legitimize their military intervention post factum as an act of fraternal assistance rather than aggression.

Despite these declarations of independence, the **reality on the ground in late 1920 was unstable**. The fall of the emirate sparked immediate resistance in parts of the country. Especially in Eastern Bukhara (the mountainous areas around Gissar and Dushanbe, populated largely by Tajik speakers), loyalists to the Emir and conservative basmachi (guerrilla) leaders retreated to rally armed opposition. By the end of 1920, the BPSR was effectively plunged into a **civil war** between the new Soviet-backed government and insurgents collectively known as the Basmachi (a term used by Bolsheviks for Muslim anti-Soviet rebels). Influential figures such as Ibrahim Bek in Eastern Bukhara and **Enver Pasha** – a former Ottoman Young Turk leader who dramatically arrived in Bukhara in late 1921 – led or inspired significant uprisings against the BPSR authorities and their Russian supporters. The Basmachi movement drew support from segments of the population upset by the new regime's reforms and by the presence of Russian troops; it framed its struggle as a defense of Islam and local autonomy against atheist Bolsheviks. In November 1921, Enver Pasha took command of disparate rebel bands and even managed to seize Dushanbe (Eastern Bukhara's main town) temporarily in early 1922. The insurgency spread and at its height threatened the BPSR's existence, compelling the Soviet Russian military to commit substantial forces to Bukhara for several years.

Governance and Reforms of the BPSR. In parallel with fighting the insurgency, the Bukhara revolutionary government pursued an ambitious program of reforms aimed at transforming Bukharan society along socialist lines. Immediately after taking power, in late 1920, Khojaev's regime implemented a series of decrees targeting the feudal and reactionary structures of the old emirate. For example, on October 30, 1920, the BPSR Central Revolutionary Committee issued the landmark **Decree "On Land"**, which **abolished large landholdings** of the Emir's family and the nobility (begs), confiscated those estates along with waqf lands (Islamic endowments), and redistributed land to landless peasants. This decree also eliminated archaic taxes from the emirate era, such as the kharaj (land tax on peasants) and zakat (tithe), signaling the intent to uproot the economic base of the old ruling class. Archival records indicate that roughly **10,000 tanabs** of land (a local measure) were confiscated in regions like Old Bukhara and Chardjuy and given to poor peasants. These agrarian reforms were initially welcomed by many peasants and the urban poor, who saw tangible gains (land or relief from taxes) and thus lent support to the new regime [2].

However, other revolutionary measures proved more divisive. The government moved against symbols of the old order: it requisitioned the Emir's treasury and valuables (much of which were reportedly sent to Moscow), and it imposed "war communism" policies such as grain requisitioning (razvyorstka) to feed the cities and Red Army. It also took a hard line against conservative Islamic institutions – closing some madrassas, sidelining the conservative ulema – and targeted large merchants and officials of the emirate for disenfranchisement or persecution. The **discontent among the population** grew as many felt these actions insulted their religion and traditional life; moreover, instances of indiscipline and looting by Red Army troops in Bukhara further alienated locals. Some prominent Jadid members of the government, including Khojaev and Fitrat, cautioned that the transformation should be gradual, but in practice they often could not restrain the radical steps urged by communist hardliners or by dire economic needs. By mid-1921, recognizing the failures of extreme policies, the BPSR leadership began to moderate its course in line with the Soviet New Economic Policy (NEP) which was introduced across Soviet territories. Elements of NEP in Bukhara (1921–1922) included easing of grain requisition in favor of a tax in kind, encouragement of small trade, and attempts to revive agriculture and handicrafts devastated by war.

These policies were meant to stabilize the economy and win back support. Nonetheless, the internal situation remained precarious, as the **Basmachi rebellion intensified in 1921–1922** with support from external sources (Afghanistan provided refuge and some arms, and pan-Islamic volunteers like Enver joined).

By mid-1922, Soviet Russia poured in reinforcements and appointed capable commanders to subdue the insurgency. General Mikhail Frunze himself took charge of operations in Central Asia. In a series of campaigns through late 1922 and 1923, the Red Army gradually defeated the main Basmachi bands. Enver Pasha was killed in August 1922 during a cavalry charge against Red troops near Dushanbe, a symbolic end to the last pan-Islamic challenge in the region. Other Basmachi leaders were either eliminated, driven into Afghanistan, or induced to surrender by 1923. By early 1923, Soviet and BPSR authorities declared Eastern Bukhara pacified and **Soviet power firmly reestablished**. While low-level guerrilla resistance flickered in some remote valleys for a few more years, it no longer posed a strategic threat. The defeat of the insurgency allowed the BPSR's Soviet-backed regime to extend its control over the entire territory of the former emirate for the first time.

Consolidation of the state went hand in hand with formal state-building measures. The BPSR took steps to solidify its legal order and governance. A key milestone was the adoption of the **first Constitution of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic** in September 1921. This constitution was drafted and approved at the Second All-Bukhara Congress of People's Deputies (delayed due to the unrest and finally convened in September 1921 in Bukhara). The 1921 Constitution declared Bukhara a "people's democratic republic" and outlined a governmental structure modelled on Soviet principles but with local adaptations. It guaranteed basic civil rights (freedom of religion, equality of all citizens regardless of ethnicity or gender), the **right to private property and free trade** (a notable inclusion reflecting NEP influences), and proclaimed the abolition of all feudal privileges and distinctions of "estate" or "nationality". Legislative power was vested in the All-Bukhara Congress of People's Deputies (with a Central Executive Committee in between sessions), and an executive Council of People's Nazirs was responsible to the CEC. Fayzulla Khojaev became the Chairman of the BPSR Central Executive Committee under the new constitution, thus continuing as de facto head of state. In practice, the constitution was an attempt to formalize what had already

been established by revolutionary decrees, while also signaling a shift to normalized governance after the tumult of 1920 [3]. It is important to note that Bukhara's constitution was more liberal in tone than the 1918 Russian SFSR constitution – e.g. by explicitly allowing private ownership – reflecting the Bolsheviks' tactical flexibility in an economically backward, largely non-proletarian society.

Toward Integration: The End of the BPSR in 1924: After 1922, with domestic opposition quelled and the economy on a modest rebound under NEP, the question arose of Bukhara's long-term relationship with the Soviet Union. During 1922–1923, the BPSR remained technically an independent Soviet Republic, one of several in Central Asia. It maintained its own government and even entered into international relations to a limited extent (for instance, it hosted a Soviet diplomatic mission to Afghanistan passing through). Internally, however, the political landscape was shifting. The **Bukhara Communist Party** (which had many indigenous members like Khojaev, Mukhitdinov, etc.) increasingly came under the influence of the central Communist Party in Moscow. In 1922, the Bukhara Communist Party was formally absorbed into the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) as a territorial organization, ending its brief existence as a separate “sympathizing party.” This integration reflected Moscow's tightening grip on local politics and reduced the autonomy of Bukhara's leadership in decision-making. By 1923, many of the Jadid intellectuals who had initially led the BPSR were either becoming full-fledged communists or were being sidelined by younger, more orthodox Bolshevik cadres. The early coalition of “Jadids and communists” gave way to **Communist one-party dominance**, mirroring developments in other Soviet republics. For example, senior Bukharan figures like Abdurauf Fitrat, who was more nationalist in outlook, fell out of favor; Fayzulla Khojaev, on the other hand, adapted and rose further, becoming a stalwart ally of Moscow in the coming years (he would later chair the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR). Concurrently, the Soviet leadership developed a plan for **national-territorial delimitation in Central Asia**. Lenin and Stalin (as Commissar for Nationalities) had long signaled the intent to replace the old colonial divisions (Turkestan, Bukhara, Khiva) with new national republics corresponding to ethnic identities. By mid-1924, policy consensus was reached in Moscow and among Central Asian Bolshevik elites that the region would be reorganized. In September 1924, a tri-

partite commission of the Turkestan ASSR (still an autonomous republic within RSFSR), Bukhara, and Khorezm SSRs worked out the boundaries for new Union republics of **Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan**, as well as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic for the Tajik areas. The leaders of Bukhara, notably Khojaev, embraced this plan, likely both out of ideological commitment to the Soviet nationality policy and recognition that Bukhara's independent existence was politically untenable in the long run.

The final act of the BPSR came at the Fifth All-Bukhara Congress of People's Deputies on 18–20 September 1924. At this Congress, delegates debated and approved the proposal for national delimitation. On 19 September 1924, a **resolution was adopted to transform the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic into the Bukhara Socialist Soviet Republic (Bukhara SSR)** – a change of name that signified the intention to join the Soviet Union as a constituent republic. By renaming itself a “Socialist Soviet Republic,” Bukhara aligned its nomenclature with other Soviet Union republics (like the Ukrainian SSR, etc.) and shed the “People's Republic” title that implied a distinct revolutionary path. The Congress further resolved that the territory of the new Bukhara SSR would be partitioned according to ethnic lines: the predominantly Uzbek and Tajik parts were to join the proposed Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, while the largely Turkmen regions (e.g., Chardjui oblast) would join the new Turkmen SSR. Arrangements were made for representation: Bukhara would send delegates to a forthcoming congress founding the Uzbek SSR, and a provisional body would manage the transition.

The implementation swiftly followed. In October 1924, the **Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic** were officially established as Union republics of the USSR. On 27 October 1924, the Uzbek SSR was proclaimed, incorporating the bulk of Bukhara's lands (along with territories from the former Turkestan ASSR and Khorezm). A Tajik Autonomous SSR was simultaneously created within the Uzbek SSR to encompass Eastern Bukhara (with Dushanbe as its capital), reflecting the large Tajik population in those regions. What remained of the Bukhara SSR as an administrative unit ceased to exist. On 18 November 1924, the outgoing Central Executive Committee of Bukhara (still chaired by Khojaev) formally **transferred all authority to the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of the Uzbek SSR**, completing the dissolution of Bukhara's statehood. Bukhara's distinct institutions were merged into those of the

Uzbek SSR; for example, Khojaev took a leading position in the Uzbek SSR government, and other Bukhara officials were absorbed into new structures. Thus, by early 1925, the process was finalized: the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic had been effectively **"voted out of existence"** (to use a later phrase) and replaced by new Soviet national republics.

In summary, the historical trajectory of Bukhara from 1920 to 1924 moved from revolutionary upheaval and fragile independence to increasing Soviet integration and eventual disappearance as a separate entity. The BPSR's short life was marked by intense struggles – militarily against insurgents and politically between reformist and radical visions – under the shadow of Soviet Russia's decisive influence. Each phase of this trajectory was intertwined with legal measures and geopolitical calculations, which we turn to in the next subsections.

Conclusion

Soviet Russia's engagement with the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic from 1920 to 1924 reveals a multifaceted strategy that combined revolutionary idealism, legal statecraft, and geopolitical calculation. Historically, the Bolsheviks intervened at a moment of crisis in Bukhara, aligning with local revolutionaries to dismantle an archaic emirate and establish a new regime. Legally, they constructed a framework of treaties and constitutional provisions that endowed Bukhara with formal sovereignty and a socialist governmental structure, even as they circumscribed that sovereignty through alliance obligations and party control. Strategically, they pursued the twin goals of securing Central Asia against foreign influence and projecting the image of a liberator of oppressed peoples.

The Bukhara People's Soviet Republic was both a genuine attempt to incorporate a non-Russian society into the revolutionary fold on somewhat autonomous terms and a calculated interim arrangement to facilitate eventual full integration into the USSR. The early years saw an earnest, if turbulent, effort to implement socialist policies appropriate to local conditions, guided by a partnership of indigenous Jadids and Russian Bolsheviks. However, as the power dynamics shifted - with internal revolt suppressed and external threats waning - Moscow tightened its grip, and the rationale for a separate Bukharan state evaporated. The voluntary merger of Bukhara into the Uzbek SSR in 1924 was thus the culmination of a process wherein de facto control preceded de jure amalgamation.

In evaluating Soviet Russia's policy toward Bukhara, one discerns a pattern of using **law as an instrument of empire**. By championing Bukhara's independence before the world and then orchestrating its Sovietization from within, the Bolsheviks achieved what previous Russian governments had not: complete political incorporation of Bukhara with minimal international fallout. This case underscores that Soviet expansion was not a blunt occupation but a subtler process of creating client states and then absorbing them, all under the banner of proletarian internationalism.

The short-lived BPSR vividly demonstrates how Soviet geopolitical interests were served by adaptive legal frameworks. It highlights the pragmatism of Lenin's regime in dealing with national questions – willing to grant symbols of sovereignty and tolerance of local particularities temporarily, so long as the central strategic objectives were met in the end. The experience also sheds light on the agency of local actors: the Bukharan communists were not mere pawns; they negotiated their own agendas, albeit within limits, and their consent legitimated Soviet domination in the eyes of the Bukharan populace.

In conclusion, from 1920 to 1924 Soviet Russia's policy in Bukhara navigated between principle and power. The strategic interest of securing Central Asia and eliminating potential threats dovetailed with the ideological aim of promoting revolution in the East. Legal foundations – alliance treaties, constitutions, congress resolutions – provided the scaffold on which this policy was built, lending an air of legality and reciprocity to what was fundamentally an asymmetrical relationship. The Bukhara People's Soviet Republic, though born in idealism and terminated by design, played a crucial transitional role: it enabled the Soviet Union to extend its reach deep into Central Asia under the guise of partnership rather than conquest. The legacy of this policy is reflected in the political geography of Central Asia and offers a case study in how emergent great powers justify and implement regional expansion in a volatile post-imperial context.

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